

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ACCRA 08590 261713Z

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

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FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5404

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY BISSAU

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY COTONOU

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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EO 11652 NA

TAGS: PINT PROP GH US GV

SUB: PRESS ACCOUNTS OF DIALLO TELL'S CONFESSION

REF: STATE 268078

1. PAO WAS APPROACHED NOV 15 BY TWO JOURNALISTS FROM PEOPLES EVENING NEWS (PEN), A NKRUMAHIST DAILY, WHO SAID THEY HAD RECEIVED A NEWS RELEASE FROM THE GUINEAN EMBASSY ABOUT DIALLO TELL'S CONFESSION THAT HE WAS A CIA AGENT. PAO TOLD THEM THE U.S. HAD OFFICIALLY REFUTED THE STORY AND THAT RADIO GUINEA HAD RUN A STORY ON THE US REACTION TO THE CONFESSION. IT WAS CLEAR TO THE PAO AT THE TIME THAT THE JOURNALISTS DID NOT WANT FACTS, BUT RATHER WERE LOOKING FOR "DASH" NOT TO RUN THE STORY.

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PAGE 02 ACCRA 08590 261713Z

PAO OF COURSE MADE NO SUCH OFFER.

2. PEN SUBSEQUENTLY RAN A THREE-PART SERIES ON THE CONFESSION IN ITS NOV 17-19 EDITIONS. (INTERESTINGLY ENOUGH, THE CONFESSION RAN OPPOSITE THE LATEST SERIES OF KIM-IL SUNG ADS.) THE PEN VERSION OF THE CONFESSION DOES NOT HAVE THE PAPER'S USUAL GRAMMATICAL ERRORS OR STYLE AND WE IMAGINE IT IS A WORD-FOR-WORD RENDERING OF THE ALLEGED GUINEAN PRESS RELEASE.

3. IN THE PEN VERSION OF THE CONFESSION, TELLI SAYS HE WAS APPROACHED BY SECRETARY KISSINGER IN 1971 IN WASHINGTON WITH AN OFFER TO SUPPORT HIS CANDIDACY FOR THE OAU PRESIDENCY IN RETRURN FOR HIS COLLABORATION IN "DEFENDING AND PRESERVING AMERICAN INTERESTS IN AFRICA, PARTICULARLY GUINEA." THE STORY PICKS UP AGAIN IN 1974 WHEN TELLI IS APPROACHED IN CONAKRY BY LIBERIAN AMBASSADOR SHERMAN, WHOM TELLI IDENTIFIES AS BEING A CIA GO-BETWEEN. SHERMAN IN TURN INTRODUCES TELLI TO AN UNNAMED AMERICAN TRADE ATTACHE, WHOM TELLI FEELS MUST BE "ONE OF THE CIA LEADERS IN THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IN GUINEA." THE REST OF THE CONFESSION IS GIVEN OVER LARGELY TO REPORTS OF CONVERSATIONS TELLI CLAIMS TO HAVE HAD WITH AMBASSADOR SHERMAN ABOUT ANGOLA AND GUINEAN DOMESTIC POLICIES. (IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT THE TELLI-SHERMAN CONVERSATIONS AS REPORTED IN PEN DID NOT GO BEYOND NORMAL DIPLOMATIC EXCHANGES.) NO ONE ELSE IS IDENTIFIED WITH THE CIA IN THE PEN ACCOUNT AND TELLI NEVER REALLY SAYS HE DID ANYTHING FOR THE CIA.

4. THE NOV 17 EDITION OF THE PALAVER TRIBUNE, GHANA'S ANSWER TO THE NATIONAL INQUIRER, RAN A FRONT -PAGE STORY ON THE TELLI CONFESSION. THE PALAVER'S VERSION OF THE CONFESSION WAS MUCH SHORTER THAN PEN'S, BUT APPEARS TO US TO COME FROM THE SAME SOURCE .ARE POUCHING COPIES OF PEN AND PALAVER ARTICLES TO DEPT.

5. PAO MET WITH THE EDITORS OF PEN AND PALAVER NOV 22 TO DISCUSS THE CONFESSION. HE INFORMED BOTH EDITORS THAT THE I.S. HAD REFUTED THE STORY AND THAT RADIO GUINEA HAD REPORTED THE U.S. REACTION TO THE CONFESSION. NEITHER EDITOR SAID THE CONFESSION STORY HAS BEEN FURNISHED BY THE GUINEAN EMBASSY: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 ACCRA 08590 261713Z

THE PEN EDITOR SAID HE HAD BEEN SITTING ON THE STORY FOR THREE MONTHS AND REFUSED TO NAME HIS SOURCE, WHILE THE PALAVER'S EDITOR SAID THE STORY WAS SENT TO HIM BY AN EX-EMPLOYEE WHO NOW LIVES IN CONAKRY. BOTH EDITORS AGREED TO RUN A BRIEF STATEMENT ON THE U.S. DENIAL OF TELLI'S CONNECTION WITH THE CIA.

6. CHARGE RAISED THE SUBJECT DURING A MEETING WITH MFA'S SENIOR PRINCIPAL SECRETARY OTOO NOV 22, SAYING WE SUSPECT STORY ON

TELLI'S CONFESSION WAS BEING PEDDLED BY GUINEANS AND WE ARE CONCERNED BY IT. CHARGE ADDED THAT THERE WAS A RUMOR MAKING THE ROUNDS THAT TELLI WAS DEAD. OTOO WAS INTERESTED, BUT NON-COMMITTAL.

.7. GIVEN THE UNSUBSTANTIATED CONNECTION BETWEEN THE TELLI STORIES AND THE GUINEAN EMBASSY. WE PLAN TO TAKE NO FURTHER ACTION ON THE MATTER APART FROM DISCUSSING THE SITUATION WITH LIBERIAN AMBASSADOR MORGAN, WHO IS CURRENTLY UNAVAILABLE DUE TO ILLNESS.
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